

# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH  
& HUMAN  
SERVICES



## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Arlington Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) consists of the following divisions:

- Health Department
- Council on Aging
- Veterans Services
- Youth Health and Safety Coalition
- Youth Counseling Center
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion

The Department also coordinates the activities of the following boards and commissions:

- Board of Health
- Council on Aging
- Veterans Council
- Board of Youth Services
- Disability Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Rainbow Commission

The mission of the HHS is to protect the health of the public and assist residents with accessing services to meet basic human needs. In order to accomplish the mission of HHS, the Department relies on many different sources of funding including, Town, state and federal funds, grants, foundation funding, and donations. Additionally, hundreds of volunteers assist with carrying out the Department mission.



## BOARD OF HEALTH

The mission of Arlington's Board of Health is to protect the public health of the town through enforcement of health codes and regulations, while promoting a healthy community. The Board of Health is a statutory board comprised of three community members at large, one of which must be a physician, appointed by the Town Manager for three-year terms. The Board holds public meetings and conducts public hearings as necessary to evaluate data, establish regulations, and review health code violations

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Health Department is located at 27 Maple Street in the Arlington Community Center. The Department handles the day-to-day procedural operations and administrative duties associated with the Board of Health. The Department is required by State statutes and regulations to perform many duties relative to the protection of public health and safety, the control of disease, the promotion of safe and sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from damage and pollution. These mandated requirements are fulfilled by environmental health and public health nursing staff within the Health Department. The Department is comprised of a Public Health Director, three Health Compliance Officers, one Administrative Assistant (which is shared with Human Services) and a part-time Public Health Nurse.

Permits Issued	2018	2019	2020	2021
Food	324	368	198	216
Tobacco	19	19	19	19
Waste Hauler	20	21	16	17
Funeral Director	7	7	7	7
Tanning Establishment	1	1	1	0
Public Pool	8	8	4	8
Public Beach	3	3	2	3
Ice Rink	1	1	0	0
Keeping of Hens	13	14	17	22
Camps	6	6	4	12
Body Art Establishment	1	1	1	3
Body Art Practitioner	2	2	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>316</b>

Inspection Type	2018	2019	2020	2021
Food Establishment & Temporary Food Event*	503	484	254	304
Tobacco Compliance Check	12	20	20	26
Housing	172	138	14	166
Demolition Inspection	21	16	7	35
Nuisance Inspection	405	408	124	97
Keeping of Hens	3	10	4	25
Bodywork Establishment	3	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,119</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>654</b>

\*Temporary food event inspections include: Farmer's Market, Feast of the East, Town Day, and other various public health events throughout the year.

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## Public Health Nursing

Communicable Disease	2019	2020	2021
Babesiosis	3	--	2
Calicivirus/norovirus	3	1	1
Campylobacter Enteritis	9	4	4
Clostridium Perfringens	2	--	--
COVID-19	--	1,051	2,478
Cryptosporidiosis	2	--	--
Cyclosporiasis	4	--	1
Dengue Fever	1	--	--
Giardia	4	--	1
Group A strep	2	--	--
Group B Strep	2	3	2
Haemophilus influenza	1	--	1
Hepatitis A	2	--	--
Hepatitis B	9	--	11
Hepatitis C	10	5	9
Hepatitis D	1	--	--
Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis	2	--	1
Influenza	130	127	7
Invasive Bacterial Infection	--	--	--
Legionellosis	1	1	3
Listeriosis	--	--	1
Lyme Disease	45	--	--
Malaria	1	--	1
Mumps	--	1	--
Pertussis	1	1	--
Salmonella	2	--	8
Shigatoxin	1	--	1
Shigellosis	1	--	--
Strep pneumonia -invasive	3	--	--
Tickborne	4	--	--

Tuberculosis contact, and suspected cases in addition to probable and confirmed cases	64	--	42
Varicella	3	--	2
West Nile Virus	--	3	--
Yersiniosis	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>2,577</b>



One of many COVID-19 vaccination clinics at Arlington High School. This one for ages 5-11 years old.

## COVID-19

The Health Department continued to lead COVID-19 pandemic response for the community in 2021. The Department continued to perform contact tracing of all positive cases, began implementing decades-long planning efforts to vaccinate the population against the virus and continued to enforce public health orders and mandates designed to limit exposure to, and harm from, the virus. Additional staff were brought in to work on pandemic response, Medical Reserve Corps volunteers.

Vaccine Type	2019	2020	2021
COVID-19 vaccination	-	-	11,188
Influenza vaccination	1,564	594	187



Health & Human Services staff take a quick break during a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for a photo with Dr. Fauci.



### ARLINGTON YOUTH HEALTH & SAFETY COALITION (AYHSC)

The Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition (AYHSC), a division of Health and Human Services, is a community-based coalition with a mission to prevent and reduce substance abuse and other risk behaviors that adversely affect youth in Arlington. Beginning in 2022 AYHSC will expand its mission to include mental health support and the promotion of positive youth development.

AYHSC and the Town of Arlington, in collaboration with the communities of Somerville, Everett, and Lexington, were awarded the MassCall3 grant from the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Abuse to support the ongoing efforts of substance abuse prevention with an emphasis on addressing racial inequities and health disparities in Arlington.



### COUNCIL ON AGING

The Council on Aging (COA), a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, is a community based social services organization that supports residents age 60 and over in Arlington. In 2021 COA staff continuously adapted toward creative ways to engage and support the older adults in Arlington while keeping them as safe as possible during the ever-evolving response to COVID-19. The COA was proud to offer all programs that were offered pre-COVID, in creative ways. In fact, although 2021 was a full 12 months of the pandemic, the COA was able to grow and expand upon many services and activities.

Also in 2021 a full year of construction and renovation work on the Arlington Community Center took place, bringing the Department very close to the project finish line. COA staff worked in temporary offices on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building throughout the year due to the construction. The Community Center is expected to be complete by the spring of 2022.

A large, new, focus for the COA in 2021 was ed-

ucation and assistance in getting residents vaccinated against COVID-19. From January – December, COA staff played an integral role in registering older adults for vaccinations and transporting them to and from their appointments. Winter and spring 2021 were consumed with many hours of reaching out, and responding, to resident inquiries about the vaccines. In one day alone, the COA received over 500 phone calls from residents with vaccine related questions. COA staff pre-registered older residents for HHS run vaccine clinics, since internet and computer access was required for appointment registration. COA staff also assisted at these clinics with logistics and support. When vaccine appointments were full at HHS clinics, COA staff searched for appointments at local pharmacies for residents and made appointments there. COA Nurse Joanne Sliney administered over 250 homebound COVID vaccines/boosters. The COA worked closely with Arlington Housing Authority to provide door-to-door vaccinations for all residents in senior housing, as well.



### Additional COA highlights:

- Celebrated the second year of offering a Technology Loan Library and received additional grant funding from Mt. Auburn Hospital in order to add more hot spots to our inventory of products. In 2021 an additional 55 Chromebooks and 25 hot spots were distributed to older adults who lacked technology access.
- Conducted over 200 instructor-led virtual exercises, yoga, stretching and other fitness classes on Zoom, free of charge to older adults in Arlington. Conducted over 100 instructor-led in-person exercise classes. In-person classes took place outdoors in Robbins Gardens during the spring, summer and fall and were moved indoors to Town



*Participants take a break at Yoga class.*



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*Charlie Card Registration.*

- Hall for the winter months.
- Received a new grant from the *I'm Still Here Foundation*, which allows the agency to launch a unique, weekly, virtual Dementia Friendly Fitness Class for residents living with dementia and their caregivers.
- Began a weekly walking club at McLennen Park, allowing dozens of older adults to gather and exercise outdoors safely. Included weekly health related program topics, including vaccinations, mental health and blood pressure screenings. Partnered with Bright-View Senior Living, to provide a coffee-hour component to the start of the program. This allowed time for socialization and relaxing conversation between residents who missed each other so much.
- Conducted over 100 additional virtual programs including weekly art therapy classes, museum tours, Irish Step Dancing shows, weekly LGBTQ & Friends support groups, Caregivers support groups, Intergenerational book club, health talks, Shakespeare discussion groups, low-vision support group, movie nights, and COVID related informational sessions.
- Launched a new monthly show with ACMI, The Arlington 60+ Connection, which provides information and local resources to older residents in Arlington.
- The robust COA Transportation program grew during 2021 and completed over 8,860 rides. Thanks to special grants from Lahey Hospital and MAPC, medical rides were offered free of charge through all of 2021. Transportation partnerships grew to include new local companies who have assisted with escort transport and wheelchair transport.
- Distributed \$14,000 to residents in need through the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Fund, \$30,000 through the Senior Property Tax Work off program and \$4,500 through the Harry Barber program.
- Connected over 100 residents with volunteer SHINE Councilors for Medicare enrollment assistance and over 50 residents with our

volunteer attorney for legal assistance.

- Continued as a certified SNAP outreach and application provider, assisting 112 residents with enrollment.
- Continued providing assistance to residents applying for LIHEAP Fuel Assistance with both new applications and renewals.
- Received funding from Lahey Hospital and Medical Center to provide 60 residents with local and organic produce deliveries weekly for 20 weeks in the summer months.
- Over 1,800 one on-one direct social work services were provided by COA Social Workers via home visits, office appointments or phone consultation.
- 50 volunteers delivered 100 turkey dinners to isolated older adults on Thanksgiving Day.
- 75 holiday gift bags were distributed by volunteers to homebound older adults through our 4th annual Warm Wishes program.
- COA continued running a monthly podiatry clinic in partnership with a local physician, completing 360 podiatry appointments in 2021.



*Outdoor senior coffee gathering.*

## VETERANS' SERVICES

Veterans' Services is a division of Health and Human Services. The Director of Veterans' Services works with Veterans living in Arlington to assist with accessing basic needs. Through Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 115, direct financial assistance is provided to veterans who qualify. Additionally, the Director assists veterans with accessing federal VA benefits.

### Veterans' Services Highlights

The Director serves as the Chairman of the Veterans Council along with six other members. The Council focuses on addressing current issues related to veteran memorials, the review and development of policies pertaining to Arlington veterans, and new projects to promote Arlington and veterans.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the annual

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Memorial Day ceremony was broadcast live by ACMI without public participation. The ceremony was filmed highlighting various locations throughout Arlington. This year's ceremony reviewed the history of Arlington National Cemetery on its 100th anniversary.

The Director coordinated efforts to collect and distribute personal protective equipment and supplies needed by our first responders during the pandemic. Arlington residents generously donated masks, gowns, face shields, gloves, and disinfectant products.

The Director assisted the Board of Health at a number of COVID-19 vaccination clinics providing vaccinations to adults and children.

The Director assists local veterans and families in applying for, and receiving, federal VA benefits. Arlington veterans and/or dependents receive over \$4.16M in tax-free veteran benefits from the VA.

The Director received the Paul Harris Award presented by the Arlington Rotary Club. It is given to a Rotarian or a member of the community that has made an outstanding contribution to the community.

The annual Veterans Day ceremony was open to the public for the first time since COVID-19 restrictions were instituted.

The Select Board unanimously approved the designation of the property adjacent to the Central Fire Station as "Arlington's Veterans Memorial Park". With this designation, long overdue improvements to this area will be made that are a fitting tribute to our veterans and military history.

The Director, in conjunction with Iron Mountain Corp., sponsored a "Wreaths Across America" event placing wreaths at the veteran burial lots at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery for the holiday season.



### ARLINGTON YOUTH COUNSELING CENTER (AYCC)

The Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC) is a state-licensed, community-based mental health center serving Arlington youth (ages 3-21) and their families. AYCC is the leading provider of outpatient and school-based child and adolescent mental health services in Arlington, offering individual, group, and family counseling, psychiatric evaluation, and medication management. Central to its mission, AYCC is committed to ensuring that all community youth and families have access to comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and high-quality mental health care, regardless of their ability to pay. In addition to mental health services, AYCC

oversees First Step – a support group for victims and survivors of domestic violence – and offers community resource coordination and case management services to Arlington residents experiencing unmet basic needs.

### 2021 AYCC Highlights

- Provided mental health services to 310 children, teens, and adult caregivers, including 90 new AYCC clients. Conducted a total of 7,934 sessions (including psychotherapy, psychiatric evaluation, and medication treatment), 5,130 of which were via telehealth.
- Provided an additional 609 hours of clinical consultation and care coordination to AYCC clients and families.
- Provided 1,000 counseling sessions to 69 Arlington Public School students through AYCC's school-based Project Success program. Roughly 1/3 of these sessions were conducted via telehealth.
- Provided weekly therapeutic support to students in Workplace, an inclusion program at Arlington High School that offers a non-traditional learning environment for students.
- Facilitated a school-based social skills group for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at the Gibbs school.
- Resumed weekly therapeutic groups for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Provided community resource support and case management to 108 Arlington residents to identify and address unmet basic needs and to facilitate access to local and statewide resources and assistance programs.
- Administered \$124,762 in emergency financial assistance from the Arlington COVID-19 Relief Fund to 66 community members.
- Collaborated with the Board of Youth Services and Arlington Public Schools to offer a virtual forum, "Parenting during a Pandemic: Body Image, Eating, and Eating Disorders," with Dr. Jodi Galin.
- Collaborated with the Board of Youth Services on a successful year-end fundraising appeal. Through the generous support of community members and local businesses, AYCC and the BYS raised nearly \$55,000 to support youth mental health services and other important programs at AYCC.
- Invested in the professional development of AYCC staff and clinicians by hosting trainings on the following topics: Racial Equity and Health; Affirming Gender Identity in Youth Programs, Art and Play Therapies; Clinical Considerations When Supporting Children on the Autism Spectrum; and Supporting Grieving Children and Adolescents.

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## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Division of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for leading the racial equity initiatives laid out by the Town. The DEI Division responds to questions, concerns, and complaints that pertain to ADA compliance, and cooperates with other departments to ensure the ADA Self-Evaluation Transition and Implementation Plan is being used and considered as projects across Town develop. The DEI Division collaborates and partners with a number of departments, boards and commissions across the Town, in addition to external organizations, to advance equity goals. The DEI Division is heavily involved in the coordinating, planning, and executing of many of the programs and events put on by the three commissions under the division: Human Rights Commission, LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission, and Disability Commission, including managing their budgets. The following activities and programs are some of the highlights that took place during 2021:

### Training and Education

- Attended week-long 2021 National ADA Symposium.
- Continued participation in the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), monthly meetings with jurisdictions across the country working on various aspects of racial equity, additional discussions and topic tailored workshops are attended.
- Continued Race And Equity Leadership (REAL) Training Program facilitated by the National League of Cities, in which Town leaders are expanding knowledge of racial equity and skills in how to operationalize and properly use racial equity toolkits in our work.
- Participated in and led YW Boston's Stand Against Racism campaign throughout the month of April for Town Departments. The DEI Division provided departments with YW curated content, resources, and the support needed to be able to hold conversations with staff focused on race.
- DEI Director is an active member of bi-weekly Racial Equity Learning Community offered through the Community Health Network Area (CHNA) #17, and an active member on both the Reparations and the Education Committees with the NAACP Mystic Valley Branch.

### Programs and Projects

- Partnered with the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance Committee to put on the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual celebration, which took place virtually for the first time.



- Established the Elevating Arlington's Voices of Color (EAVoC) Archive Project, in partnership with the Robbins Library and Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) in early 2021. EAVoC combines the creation of a digital archive to give voice to BIPOC community members and arts programming with artists of color.
- Collaborated on programming with Arlington Reads Together for book selection, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* by Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum as the community read for 2021.
- Hosted Community Conversations series of race talks in collaboration with the Department of Planning & Community Development, True Story Theater, EcoWeek, Arlington Community Media Inc. (ACMi), and other participants.
  - Session 1: Outdoors for All, featuring environmental educator and conservation advocate Parker McMullen Bushman
  - Session 2: Active Bystander Skills Workshop in partnership with True Story Theater
  - Session 3: Who Can Live Here, Who Decides & Why? a panel discussion focusing on fair housing in Arlington
  - Session 4: Stories of Housing in Arlington in partnership with True Story Theater
  - Session 5: Listening to Differing Perspectives- The Power of Symbolism- exploring the mental models of framing, perspectives, the importance of listening and the impact symbols have on people
- Organized and executed first in-person June-teenth Celebration.
- Collaborated with ACAC and Artist in Residence Chanel Thervil on community engagement programming to support *Portraits of*





*Black Arlington* project. Continued engagement opportunities include creation of affinity spaces for Black community members to share, gather, and converse.

- Member of Reprecincting Working Group, to revise precinct boundary lines with an equitable lens using 2020 Census Data, to make recommendations to Select Board for final map.
- Arlington received final score of 100 points on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's Municipal Equality Index (MEI), which examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are of LGBTQ people who live and work in the town.
- Co-founded MA DEI Coalition, a network of municipal DEI leaders that meet twice a month to discuss best practices and challenges to problem solve within the DEI field.

## Goals Moving Forward

- Work closely with DPW, Planning, and Facilities Departments, along with the Disability Commission to continue advancement and coordination of ADA Transition and Implementation Plan.
- Complete the Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL) Training Program with NLC. Integrate the use of racial equity toolkit into every Town department to evaluate and improve policies and procedures.
- Coordinate and align DEI programming and equity initiatives with the DEI Director for Arlington Public Schools.
- Establish outreach and communication initiatives to improve access and expand community engagement.
- Municipal Equality Index (MEI) Working Group will address areas in need of change specifically improvements to the Town's laws, policies, and services affecting the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Conduct an equity audit/needs assessment to inform the creation of the Equity Action Plan, followed by implementation steps, that

will provide the beginning stages of a road-map for advancing equity across all facets of the Town and that will be a living document to be added to and changed as seen fit.

- Expand summer Community Conversation series to be collaborative with multiple departments and APS DEI.
- Expand the Elevating Arlington's Voices of Color (EAVoC) project and supplemental programming, to continue to give voice to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members.
- Formalize and continue the MA DEI Coalition, established in early 2021, to connect DEI municipal leaders across the state to share challenges and best practices.

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

The Arlington Disability Commission (ADC) continue to provide information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to Town officials, residents, public and private agencies, and others to ensure that people with physical, sensory, cognitive, mental illness, and other disabilities have equal access to Town facilities, services, and programs.

The Commission continued the work of building relationships with other commissions and Town departments by inviting representatives of various departments, such as Margaret Credle Thomas, Arlington Public Schools' Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director; and Michael Ciampa, Building Inspector, to share their work and discuss how the Commission can be of support. Christine Bongiorno, Health and Human Services Director, also provided the Commission with updates regarding the Town's ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response, and lent support to the Commission's concern about vaccine equity for disabled residents. Partnering with Town representatives and commissions has promoted awareness about the Commission and furthered its mission of advocating for residents with disabilities.

The Commission's typical outreach events were curtailed by the pandemic, but the Commission hopes that the wide-spread adoption of remote and hybrid meeting technology will facilitate inclusion for people with disabilities in civic life in the future.

The Town continues to advance accessibility and ADA compliance in public buildings and open spaces. Notable examples in 2021 are the Town Hall Plaza and entrance; continued work on the Reservoir beach, playground, and path; and continued improvements on sidewalks at Broadway Plaza and Medford Street.

## 2021 Highlights

- Proposed and advocated for an amendment of the Town's Zoning Bylaws to clarify that

special permits must be in compliance with ADA and MAAB guidelines.

- Advocated for expanded remote and hybrid participation opportunities in commissions and meetings:
- Participated in the Remote Participation Study Committee.
- Worked with staff to test and use a new captioning system for Town Meeting.
- Advocated for a disability awareness curriculum, "Understanding Our Differences," to be used in all elementary schools, by developing partnership with the organization.
- Worked with the Recreation Department on a playground accessibility chart, posted on the Recreation Department website.
- Provided input for the Open Space Plan and playground rebuilding plans.
- Participated in transportation focused meetings, and organized an educational meeting on automated traffic signals.
- Expanded and maintained communication efforts:
  - Created a resource list, planned for release on the Commission web page in 2022.
  - Maintained the Facebook Page.
- Continued participation in the Arlington High School Rebuilding Committee.
- Organized and participated in meetings to review architectural plans for private and public entities for ADA compliance.
- Met for the yearly Commission retreat to prioritize goals.

The Commission thanks former Chairs Cynthia DeAngelis and Darcy Devney for their dedicated service. Three new Co-Chairs Grace Carpenter, Paul Raia, and Paul Parravano were elected in September, and a new commissioner was appointed in December.

The Commission will continue to advocate for the rights of Arlington residents living with disabilities. All interested residents are encouraged to attend the monthly public meetings, on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m.

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The mission of the AHRC is to work individually and collaboratively with various groups in our community to celebrate the ever-changing tapestry of our Town, and to emphasize, through educational and social outreach, the danger of intolerance at every level. The Town Manager, School Committee, Select Board, and the Town Moderator have appointing authority for thirteen members of the Commission.

The AHRC held regular monthly meetings throughout 2021, with working groups meeting monthly or as appropriate, based on need. The Commission also held 3 extra meetings to address specific time-sensitive issues, such as crafting a statement on the violence in Israel and the resignation of one of the Commissioners. The current co-chairs, Drake Pusey and Hina Jolin, were elected in January 2021. New co-chairs will be elected in January 2022.

Even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing policies, discussion about diversity, racial equality, and inclusion continued within the Town. Heightened awareness of racial and religious persecution domestically and internationally allowed for further reflection by the community on these issues within our Town. To address incidents of racism, homophobia, religious persecution, and other human rights violations in the Town of Arlington, the AHRC focused on the education and social awareness of the community. The AHRC promoted conversation and action by addressing individual incidents of human rights violations, fostering debate about critical human rights issues in Town through sponsored programs, and fostered community activities to make Arlington a more welcoming and inclusive town.

During 2021 AHRC Working Groups promoted community engagement by inviting community members to volunteer to work with Commissioners in developing initiatives to broaden awareness. Working Groups focusing on Black Lives Matter, Indigenous Peoples Day, schools and education, events, and outreach met monthly and reported to the full Commission at regular meetings to ensure transparency. Other teams focused on digital communications and explored housing issues.

## Education, Training, and Institution Building

- Commissioners renewed ethics training.
- Relationships with the Town Manager, Chief of Police, and Co-Chairs of Town Commissions were maintained and strengthened to promote the needs of the community at large.
- Community Outreach
- The AHRC continued to offer public forum during each monthly meeting to give community members the opportunity to address the Commission on matters relating to equality and fairness. Throughout the year several community members took advantage of this opportunity.
- The Community was given the opportunity to meet with Commissioners once a month at the monthly Coffee Chats to share ideas and experiences in an informal setting. Coffee chats were held virtually most of the year, with a couple sessions at the Farmers' Mar-



ket during the summer.

- Regular e-newsletter that reaches over 700 subscribers.
- Posted approximately 90 times on Facebook, with the page reaching nearly 17,000 people.
- The AHRC Twitter account continues to be active and contributes to our community reach via social media.
- AHRC Instagram account currently has 303 followers, an increase of more than 100% from last year. The YouTube page continues to be maintained as a forum to post all recorded events.
- Co-sponsored events with or publicized events with a wide range of community groups and government entities.
- AHRC representatives participated in the Massachusetts Association of Human Rights Commission (MAHRC) meetings, the Chief's Advisory Council, and the Civilian Review Board Exploratory Committee monthly.
- Continued co-sponsorship of the Town's Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration and began working collaboratively to support its efforts.
- Celebrated Black History Month in February 2021 by expanding our collection of banners along Massachusetts Avenue highlighting Black Massachusetts citizens.
- Co-Sponsored a series of Community Conversations in 2021 related to racial equity, gun violence, and tolerance.
- Organized an in-person celebration for the recognition of Juneteenth on the steps of Town Hall.
- Worked with the Town of Newton to promote an in-person celebration for Indigenous Peoples Day.

## Formal AHRC Statements

- January 6<sup>th</sup> Attack on the Capitol
- Farmers' Protest in India
- Coup in Myanmar
- Atlanta, GA Shootings Targeting the Asian Community
- Israeli-Palestinian Violence
- Support for Haiti
- Transition of Afghanistan
- Endorsement of the Massachusetts Indigenous Legislative Agenda

## Other Website Posts

- Current MA State Legislative Efforts
- Intersection of Guns & Hate

## Incidents and Complaint Response

- Handled 50 incidents related to human rights violations occurring in Arlington. Incidents were reported by residents, schools, and the APD, as follows: 50 Cases, 7 of which involved the APS and 33 of which were also referred from or handled by the APD.
- Continued to work closely with the APD and APS to learn of, track and, where necessary, address incidents impacting human and civil rights.
- Continued to work under a Memorandum of Agreement that includes the APS, AHRC, and APD sets forward Guidelines for Responding to Hate Incidents in the Arlington Public Schools

2021 was another year of changes that required the community and the Commission to adapt alike. The AHRC held commissioner meet ups, virtual meetings and events to encourage community engagement to welcome and celebrate diversity. The Commission sponsored and held community activities, discussions with police, and outreach to community groups to foster respect, and facilitate training, education and incident reporting with the police, the Town and our schools to increase protection for all in Arlington.

The AHRC helped the Town of Arlington celebrate its first Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples Day to raise awareness of the continuing work needed to address inequities that have lasted for centuries.

Arlington values equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to building a community where everyone is heard, respected, and protected.

## LGBTQIA+ RAINBOW COMMISSION

Established by Town Meeting in 2017, the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission is a volunteer group of Arlington residents, appointed by the Town government, who promote the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups through affirming policies and programs, resources, advocacy, and community-building with the vision that the Town of Arlington will fully include the LGBTQIA+ community in all aspects of Town life.

During 2021 the Commission focused efforts in these main areas:

## Hosted Community-Engagement Activities

Community Outreach events bringing community together virtually as pandemic continued.

- Updated commission logo for improved branding, focused on Rainbow Commission.
- Monthly newsletters about upcoming events, community activities and opportunities.
- Pride - In-person Pride gathering at Uncle Sam Park on June 13<sup>th</sup>, with giveaways

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and rainbow crosswalk painting in Arlington Center.

## Cosponsored Community Events

LGBTQ Seniors and Friends + weekly virtual meetings

- Starlight Square performances in Central Square with Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
  - Virtual Event cosponsored by LexPride, Belmont LGBTQ Alliance, Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission, Winchester's Network for Social Justice, and the city of Somerville
  - Installation at First Parish Church with heart-shaped display of transgender flags
- Intergenerational SAGE Table – Council on Aging - In-person event at Town Hall
- Transgender Day of Remembrance interview on ACMi (5:17) - Jointly with LexPride
- Queer Book Group – Robbins Library
- Reel Queer films – Council on Aging and Robbins Library.

## Collaborations with Town Government and Staff

- The Commission continued our work with the Town's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director, as a key liaison and support resource, who continues to help keep us on track with Town leadership and policies, and provides invaluable counsel and guidance throughout the year.
- Pride Banners - 6 new banners were added for 2021 and the existing banners were updated with the new logo. All were hung in June 2021 for the celebration of pride month.
- Recruited new commissioners to further grow the commission.
- Worked with Town Manager and Health & Human Services to implement changes to maintain a Municipal Equality Index Score of 100 for Arlington for the 2nd year in a row.
- Attended meetings of the Human Rights Commission, LexPride, and Select Board.
- Co-chairs participated in Town commission chair meetings, with the Human Rights Commission, and Disability Commission Chairs.

- Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rod MacNeal was appointed liaison to the Commission by the School Committee. He and Rainbow Commissioner Molly Blaauw Gillis established the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Task Force, with multiple stakeholders, to promote and support continued awareness, empathy, access, safety, inclusion, and belonging for LGBTQIA+ students, families, caregivers, and staff.

## Advocacy & Social Justice

- Coordinated with DEI Director to support and amplify her efforts for Town programming.
- Helped draft the annual Pride Proclamation from the Select Board, highlighting the continued challenges of LGBTQIA+ people of color and HRC CEI score of 100

## Communications

- Maintained Facebook page (481 followers, up from 335 in 2020 and 275 in 2019), Twitter (285 followers, up from 234 in 2020 and 170 in 2019), Instagram (148 followers, new in 2021), email list (348 contacts, up from 245 in 2020 and 195 in 2019) and website (4731 views, compared to 5473 views in 2020 and 2400 in 2019, 3057 visitors in 2021, compared to 3982 in 2020 and 1350 in 2019) to update the community on Commission activities, other area events and issues of interest or importance to the LGBTQIA+ community
- Responded to countless emails from individuals seeking resources and advice regarding LGBTQIA+ issues.
- Posted about events, engaged in community discussions, and shared resources in various Arlington Facebook groups

The commission generally meets on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm via Zoom during the pandemic. All meetings are open to the public and the commission encourages community members and representatives from other Town committees and commissions to attend. More info at [rainbowarlington.org](https://rainbowarlington.org) or email [rainbow@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:rainbow@town.arlington.ma.us).



*Pride festivities at Uncle Sam Park and Crosswalk painting at Mass Ave and Pleasant in Arlington Center.*